DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 826 SP 029 050

AUTHOR Quisenberry, Nancy L.
TITLE Teacher Education in the United States: Challenge for the Future.
PUB DATE Jul 87
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the World Assembly of the International Council on Education for Teaching (34th, Eindhoven, Netherlands, July 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beginning Teachers; College School Cooperation; *Educational Change; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Public Opinion; School Organization; Student Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS *Excellence in Education

ABSTRACT

For the past five years, education in the United States has received major criticism and various reforms have been suggested. The recommendations, legislation, and proposed changes that have resulted have created consternation, frustration, and optimism among teacher educators. The optimism stems from the desire to continue to improve the preparation of teachers and the opportunities which have opened up with long sought support from legislators and university officials. The criticism and suggestions for change can be grouped into three categories: (1) working conditions and structures of schools; (2) needed changes in teacher preparation programs; and (3) public opinion regarding education in the United States. This paper calls for a vigorous campaign to change public opinion. An overview of changes in teacher preparation over the past decade is presented. Future directions are explored and proposed areas of change are detailed. Attention is focused on program planning for teacher education, a research-based pedagogy, school/university partnerships, recruitment of the ablest and minorities, and the status of beginning teachers. (Author/MT)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED286826

# TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES:

# CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

By

Nancy L. Quisenberry
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
College of Education
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901

A paper prepared for presentation at the

ICET Thirty Fourth World Assembly

July 20-24, 1987

Eindhoven, The Netherlands

SP 029 050

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ICET

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES: CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

The educational system of a country serves as a basis for the social and economic growth and development of not only the country itself but of the citizenry. When the educational system of a developed country is criticized and threatened with failure of providing adequately for the young people of the country, legislators, business persons, governors, educators, and citizens in general react. Many of you are aware that education in the United States has undergone major criticism and suggested reform in the past five years.

On April 26, 1983, David Pierpont Gardner, Chairman of the National Commission on Excellence in Education submitted to Secretary of Education T. H. Bell, the Commission Report, A NATION AT RISK: THE IMPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM. Since then it is estimated that nearly 300 reports have been written by professional organizations, commissions, committees, state legislators, governors and others concerned with education at all levels in the United States. While the recommendations and counter-recommendations are directed at all levels of education--from kindergarten to university--this paper focuses on teacher education.

To review the reports, one would assume that little has changed in teacher education for many years. This erroneous assumption is the result of lack of knowledge about teacher preparation programs in the United States and the nature of the composition of the committees and commissions preparing the reports. Thus, the recommendations, legislation, and proposed changes have created consternation, frustration, and optimism among teacher educators. The consternation and frustration results from the changes which seem inappropriate and out of step with the developments in teacher education over the past ten years. The optimism stems from the desire to continue to improve the preparation of teachers, the long sought support for teacher education now being received from university administrators, legislators, and state officals, and the opportunity to educate persons outside the field of teacher education as to what is really happening in the field.

The criticism and suggestions for change have merit and are not entirely without justification. Teacher education programs do exist that have not kept pace with change. Such programs prepare teachers with minimal courses in general education, academic content areas, pedagogy, and field experiences. Some state departments of education require minimal preparation and set low standards for both university/college teacher preparation programs and for teachers and administrators entering the field. To

criticize all programs for the limitations of some is unjustified. Thus, it is appropriate that in light of the criticism, teacher education needs to be examined and continued improvement sought.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICISMS?

We cannot consider the faults of teacher education without a look at the faults of the entire educational system in America and the concerns expressed by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. In addition to concerns expressed on matters such as industry and commerce, the Commission stated:

> The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy, and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised, not simply from the material rewards that accompany competent performance, but also from the chance to participate fully in our national life. A high level of shared education is essential to a free, democratic society and to the fostering of a common culture, especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983 p.7)

Thus, the product of schools, the students, and the conditions in which teachers work are of as great a concern as the preparation programs.

The basic criticisms found throughout the reports are:

1. The students entering teacher education programs are drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students.

2. The preparation of teachers is heavily weighted with education methods courses at the expense of courses in the subject areas to be taught, especially for elementary teachers.

3. Teaching conditions and salaries discourage the most able students from entering the field.

4. Teachers are not fully prepared in the subject areas which they will teach.

5. Severe shortages exist for certain kinds of teachers, i.e. math and science, and a growing teacher shortage is predicted.

6. A severe shortage of minority teachers exists which is predicted to become even greater by the turn of the century.

These criticisms have been debated across the country and for the most part are an accurate representation of the status of teaching and education in 1983. Serious questions have been raised, however, about the data used regarding the status of students in teacher education programs and the

amount of methodology required for preservice teachers. An earlier report by Corrigan (1983) indicated that "a review of teacher education from a national perspective shows that on an average, professional study makes up about one-fourth of elementary teacher education programs and less than one-fourth for secondary teachers" (p.6). To generalize these criticisms to all programs and all states is to ignore the progress which has been made in teacher education over the past decade. Teacher education cannot be held accountable for factors determined by society and government such as level of financial support for schools and minimal or non-existant standards for certifying teachers.

The above criticisms can be grouped into three categories:

1. Those which require changes in working conditions and the structure of schools,

2. Those which require change in teacher preparation programs, and

3. Those which require a renewed and revitalized opinion of education in the United States.

The first category requires a new vision of the function of schools in our society. Leadership for restructuring schools must come from teachers, administrators, and professional organizations with support from laypersons and legislators. Teacher education professionals need to be involved in this process, but leadership must come from the

practicing professionals in the field. Without the support of legislators, governors, and school boards, conditions under which teachers work cannot be changed, since many such conditions are the result of inadequate financial support.

For years educators have discussed the integration of technology into the educational process. While some success has been experienced with the use of computers and calculators, opportunities for networking and online data base use are limited at best and virtually unheard of in many schools. To move from the traditional one teacher per classroom to other configuations of resource use will take insight and planning as yet unrealized in the multitude of reports presently before us.

The second category, changing teacher preparation programs, will require the cooperation of university administrators, faculties from throughout the university, teacher educators, personnel from the public schools, state departments of education, and professional organizations concerned with education. Teachers cannot be prepared outside the context of schools. Programs for preparing teachers must have a firm base in research and knowledge of sound professional practices. Continuous dialogue between teacher educators and school personnel must be instituted if teacher preparation programs are to remain current.

The third category, renewed public opinion of education, will require a vigorous campaign to inform the

public about schools and the importance of schooling to our society. The information should be aimed at increasing financial and moral support as well as encouraging bright young people, including minorities, to enter the profession of teaching.

## RECENT CHANGES IN THE PROFESSION

Over the past 10 years teacher education has changed in response to changes in the profession. Prior to the 1970's teacher education programs were criticized for waiting until the final semester to place students into schools for actual experience with children or young people. This criticism was justified, in that many wouldbe teachers felt that they were placed in a "sink or swim" position. Without any prior experience, they were expected to suddenly "perform" with their pupils. Worse yet, some discovered they did not like teaching in their last semester of college.

During the latter part of the '70s, several states and many institutions acted to implement prestudent teaching field experiences in teacher education programs. While the number of hours varied, the intent appeared to be much the same as that encouraged in the Illinois MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR APPROVING ILLINOIS TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS (1985), to involve the students in field experiences early in their university program, culminating with close and competent supervision during student

teaching. Programs such as the one institionalized at Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1974 have resulted in positive support from school personnel and students (Quisenberry, Quisenberry, and Willis, 1978).

Another area of teacher education curriculum which has received attention and has improved over the last ten years is that of cultural pluralism and multicultural education. The National Council for the Accreditation of Colleges of Teacher Education added a requirement for multicultural education for institutions seeking NCATE accreditation in 1979. Some states such as Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota have added a multicultural education requirement to state program approval procedures for teacher education. In response, colleges and universities have added components dealing with understanding and teaching children of diverse backgrounds including cultures from both inside and outside the United States.

Following the passage of THE EDUCATION OF All HANDICAPPED CHILDREN'S ACT, Public Law 94-142 (1978), most colleges of education were bombarded with requests for assisting teachers who had received children with special needs into their regular classrooms. It became quickly apparent that beginning teachers needed preparation for the problems that experienced teachers were realizing in their classrooms. The American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education provided assistance and materials to

support colleges of education in developing and implementing mainstreaming components in their preparation programs. The U.S. Office of Special Education provided competitive Dean's Grants for assisting colleges of education in institutionalizing programs. Many innovative programs were developed and networks established for sharing ideas among teacher educators. New courses were added or components were infused into existing required courses. NCATE, as well as many state departments of education, established a requirement for programs seeking accreditation or program approval from state agencies.

More recently, attention has been given to admission and retention standards for students entering teacher education programs. NCATE has established two new requirements for admission. The first establishes a grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for entering students. The second requires that tests be used to assess entering student abilites. A growing number of states have added assessment tests for admission to teacher education.

In addition to admission tests, colleges of education have added checkpoints for determining student progress toward completion of the teacher education program. This includes checking grade point averages, field experience evaluations, faculty evaluations, and tests of pedagogy and major areas of study.

Some colleges of education have implemented extended programs. These programs may or may not result in a Masters Degree, but all extend initial teacher preparation to five or six years. In some situations, no education courses are taken during the four year baccalaurate program; in other programs education courses are taken during the first four years but certification is not possible without completion of the extended program. In most cases, longer in-school internships are required.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS NEEDED

With the publication of the Holmes (TOMORROW'S TEACHERS. . ., 1986) and Carnegie (A NATION PREPARED: . . ., 1986) Reports, teacher education is in a turmoil. The Holmes Report proposes far-reaching structural changes not only in teacher preparation programs but in career ladders for teachers and the use of unprepared personnel for the bulk of the teaching force. Regardless of the outcome of the issue of whether or not teachers should be prepared in a four-year baccalaureate program, an extended baccalaureate program, or a masters degree program, faculty and administrators preparing teachers must assess their programs to determine how successfully they are meeting the needs of a beginning teacher.

Maintaining a balance between general education, subject matter content, and pedagogy is no longer

acceptable. Closer scrutiny must be given to the general education needs of students preparing to be teachers. Elementary education professionals in particular must come to grips with a general education program appropriate for teachers of elementary students. The call for a liberal arts degree as preparation for elementary and early childhood teaching has some merit but overlooks the need for preparation in all the basic subject areas. Broad preparation across the basic subject areas with attention to depth in at least one area would provide a knowledge of the structure of a discipline. Student choice from a smorgasbord of easy, unrelated general education courses should be avoided.

Secondly, pedagogy must be research based. The content of education courses should be driven by sound educational practices and established research. The curriculum of the the teacher education program should be derived from the needs of teachers for knowledge, skills, and experience. This proposal assumes that studies of beginning as well as experienced teachers will be used to determine curriculum.

Thirdly, school/university partnerships should play a vital role in the development and maintainance of teacher education programs. Ideally, field placements for students in teacher education programs would occur in established Professional Education Centers, such as those at Syracuse and Southern Illinois University Carbondale (McIntyre,

1983). Field placements should extend throughout the preparation program, thus giving students an opportunity to observe and participate in professional sites throughout their university program. Such a program also encourages interaction between teacher educators at the university and teacher practioners in the schools.

In addition, the recruitment of bright, able young people for careers in education has traditionally fallen to the universities and colleges. Given the attitude of society towards schools and the profession of teaching, other resources will have to be utilized to recruit highly qualified individuals into teaching. Federal and state scholarships have reversed the trend of decreased numbers in teacher education programs, but only as far as the majority population is concerned. Minority recruitment is far too low and creates a long-term problem for meeting teacher shortages in minority classrooms for the next decade. Inducements for minorities to enter and remain in the profession must come from goverment and society. Teacher education programs must, then, pave the way for successful careers of minority candidates.

Finally, teacher educators, as well as local and state school officials, need to consider the status of beginning teachers. Only a few states have initiated programs or plans for assisting and supporting teachers in their initial year of teaching. NCATE has recently added a requirement

for universities and colleges seeking NCATE accrediation which addresses this issue. NCATE accredited universities and colleges must followup beginning teachers in their area and seek to asist and support them during their first year of teaching. This is a marvelous opportunity for faculty of teacher education programs to observe first hand the preparation of their graduates and to learn what they may be lacking. It is also an excellent opportunity to work on staff development with local school systems.

## CONCLUSION

Teacher education is at a threshold. Never before has the profession received such attention as that received in the past four years. Some of the attention has been highly critical--some deserved and some not. Some of the attention has been supportive and informative. While teacher education is in the limelight, teacher educators must exert vigorous leadership and envision the needs of teachers now being prepared to educate our children in the Twenty-first century. Those who prepare teachers must not be satisfied with the progress of the past decade. They must use this window of opportunity to improve and revitalize teacher education.

## REFERENCES

A NATION PREPARED: TEACHERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, The Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, New York: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, May, 1986.

Corrigan, D. Quality in Teaching and Teacher Education. MAN SOCIETY TECHNOLOGY, pp. 6-10, February, 1983.

Illinois State Board of Education, MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR APPROVING ILLINOIS TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS, Springfield, IL, 1985.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. A NATION AT RISK: THE IMPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM, Washington, D.C., 1983.

McIntyre, D. J. FIELD EXPERIENCES IN TEACHER EDUCATION: FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER. Foundation for Excellence in Teacher Education and ERIC Clearinghouse for Teacher Education, Washington, D.C., 1983.

Quisenberry, N. L., Quisenberry, J. D., and Willis, M. AN EVALUATION OF THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY-CARBONDALE CENTER APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES, A paper presented to the Association of Teacher Educators 1978 National Conference, Las Vegas, NV., Feb. 3, 1978.

TOMORROW'S TEACHERS, A REPORT OF THE HOLMES GROUP, East Lansing: The Holmes Group, Inc., 1986.

U.S. Congress, THE EDUCATION OF ALL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN'S ACT, PUBLIC LAW 94-142, Washington, D.C., 1978.